

PARKLAND ACQUISITIONS AND RENOVATIONS FOR COMMUNITIES (PARC) GRANT PROGRAM SELECTION SYSTEM

In order to distribute limited grant funds among an overwhelming number of applicants, a project selection system has been developed for outdoor recreation projects. The rating system considers demographic and project quality factors in order to identify those projects that best protect natural resources in communities that have the greatest need for financial assistance and that have made efforts to implement their open space and recreation plans in coordination with local planning for sustainable growth.

In reviewing applications and developing their recommendations to the Secretary of Energy and Environmental Affairs, the review team considers:

1. Demographics

Four categories are evaluated by DCS to calculate a community's demographic score. Communities with higher population density, lower median income, and higher percentage of households below poverty level receive higher demographic scores. **(Scores are calculated by DCS; therefore, there is no need to submit any statistics or narrative on your community's behalf.)**

2. Community Profile Score

- Environmental Justice Community – calculated by EEA
- Open space availability – calculated by EEA

3. Project Quality

- Consistency with EEA policies, including increasing access to recreational amenities for all, most specifically, increasing access for people with disabilities, and environmental education.
- Addition of new parkland by acquisition, rededication, or renovation of unusable parkland, except in cases of new parks that include significant tree removal.
- Climate resilience.
- Water-based recreation.
- Enhanced outreach to Environmental Justice populations.
- Stewardship – Projects that involve financial contribution from a nonprofit or for-profit organization will be given higher consideration. These include projects that obtain a commitment from an organization for help with paying for or performing future maintenance. Also, communities that have adequately planned for the future maintenance of their park system through funding and staff levels will receive more points.
- Consistency with state and municipal plans, including Executive Order 525.

4. Bonus Points

- Applicant has signed a Community Compact with a Sustainable Development and Land Protection Best Practice
- Applications that rate in the top two-thirds of those received will have the opportunity for an additional five points IF it is submitted by a Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program community AND MVP plan includes priority implementation project(s) relevant to parks and land conservation

SELECTION NOTES:

Preservation of Agricultural Land

Executive Order #193 discourages the irreversible conversion of the Commonwealth's productive agricultural land base. State grants shall not be used to encourage the irreversible conversion of agricultural land to other uses when feasible alternatives are available. In the event that all feasible alternatives have been explored, and the conversion of suitable agricultural lands to non-agricultural use remains the only feasible alternative to protection of open space, a mitigation plan must be developed to be eligible for reimbursement under a state grant. Project that would convert any prime agricultural lands should consult with the Department Agricultural Resources at (617) 626-1700 prior to submitting an application.

RATING SYSTEM for PARC Grant Program Projects

CATEGORY	SUB-CATEGORY	Description	Partial Points	Max
DEMOGRAPHICS	Population Density	Figures are obtained from MassGIS and put into rank order by DCS	1-6	7
	Median Income	Figures are obtained from MISER and put into rank order by DCS	1-5	6
	Percentage of Households below Poverty Level	Figures are obtained from MISER and put into rank order by DCS	1-5	6
	Housing Choice Initiative	Applicant has been designated as a Housing Choice Community		2
COMMUNITY PROFILE SCORE	Environmental Justice Community	Calculated by DCS	1-8	9
	Open Space Availability	Percent of protected open space by Census tract (points awarded by how project ranks against other applications)	1-9	10
PROJECT QUALITY	Consistency with current EEA policies	Project located in an area mapped as an Environmental Justice Census tract	1-5	6
		Project increases access to recreation to all residents, especially those that go above and beyond to provide multiple amenities for people with disabilities	1-4	5
		Project that increases access to recreational amenities to community's residents through acquisition/parkland dedication and/or development of a new park or renovation of currently unusable park (points will not be awarded to new parks that include a significant amount of tree removal)	2	6
		Site offers environmental education and/or interpretive services	1-2	3
	Climate Resiliency	Acquisition, development, or renovation project that protects or enhances water-based recreation	3	5
		Project quartile in UMass I-CARES Urban Heat Island Dataviewer	1-3	4
		Project design incorporates resiliency, such as turning vacant lots into community gardens and urban forests, adding significantly to the park's tree cover, increasing pervious surface, stormwater retention, water storage, installing pergolas, etc.	1-7	8
	Stewardship	Cooperative project between applicant and other municipality or non-profit organization for construction funding and/or commitment for future park maintenance	1-2	3
		Municipality has adequate maintenance budget and staffing levels to have a well looked after municipal park system	1	2
	Public Meeting	Municipality has conducted a public meeting on project with demonstrated enhanced outreach to Environmental Justice populations	1-2	3
	Consistency with plans	Points awarded based on how many goals, objectives, or action plan items from community's Open Space and Recreation Plan are advanced	0.5-1.5	2
		Points awarded based on how many goals and objectives from the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan are advanced	1-3	4
	Distribution of state resources	Applicant has not received a PARC grant in the past five grant rounds		2
	Overall project quality	Overall ability of project to meet Secretary's priorities	1-6	7
TOTAL				100
BONUS POINTS	Community Compact	Applicant has signed a Community Compact with a Sustainable Development and Land Protection Best Practice		2
	Municipal Vulnerability Preparedness Program	Applications rated in the top two-thirds are eligible for up to 5 points <u>IF</u> it is a MVP community <u>AND</u> MVP plan includes priority implementation project(s) relevant to parks and land conservation	1-4	5